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Ligustro in his studio.

A man who'd never taken an art lesson in his life suffered a heart attack, lapsed into a coma — and woke up with the talent to create valuable masterpieces amazingly similar to those of a long-dead Japanese artist.

Incredibly, Ligustro Berio can create pictures in the style of Japanese printmaker Hokusai, who died in 1849.

But the 70-year-old retired technician has never been to Japan and he'd never studied art before his brush with death.

Yet art experts say his drawings are perfect examples of Hokusai's ancient printmaking techniques.

"Berio has developed an unsurpassable ability in his prints. They're at the high level of top Japanese artists," said Jack Hillier, who appraises Japanese art for Sotheby's in London.

Although so far Berio has chosen not to put them on the market, Hillier says they would sell for about \$30,000 each.

Berio told The ENQUIRER: "Life began for me after my experience with death.

"Before my heart attack, I'd never even picked up a pencil to draw a picture."

Berio's amazing story began in 1972. He was traveling around Italy, installing olive presses, when he suffered a heart attack.

"I fell into a coma for three days," recalled Berio, who lives in Oneglia, near Genoa.

"When I came out of it, I knew immediately something extraordinary had happened.

"I began to have dreams. When I woke up, I'd draw. Certain images just popped into my head."

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"I don't know if I'm Hokusai's reincarnation. But I like to think I've been chosen by him to carry on his work."

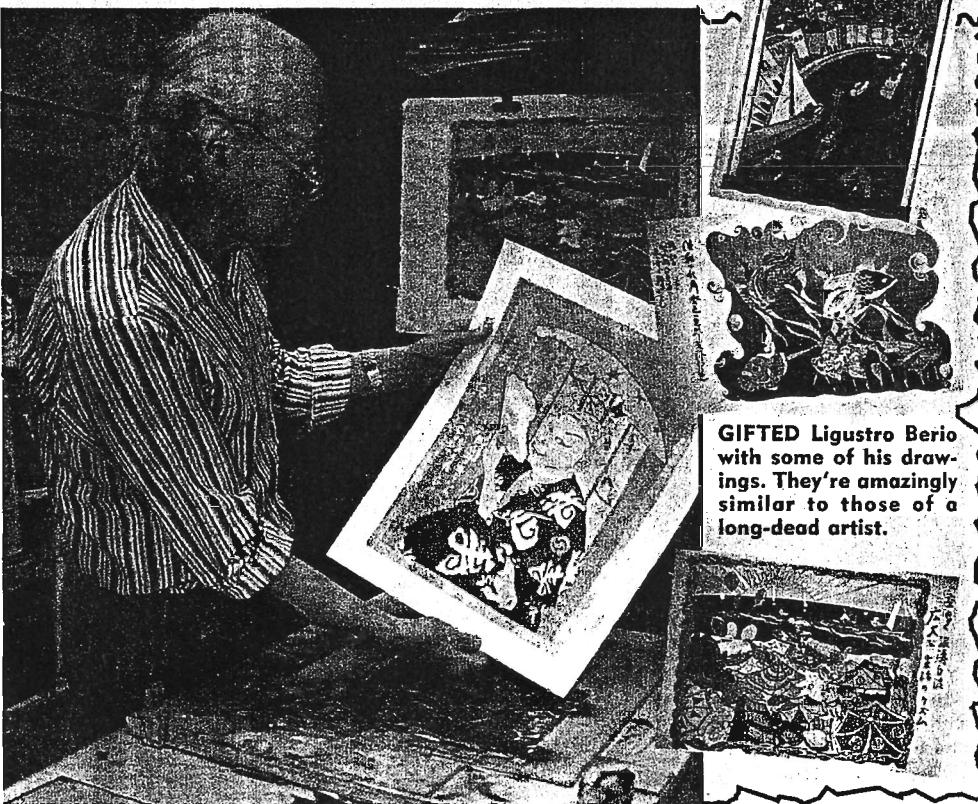
The remarkable prints take up to two months to complete and sometimes have 180 different colors.

"Berio's prints are an incredible, unexplainable, yet perfect revival of an ancient Japanese technique," said leading Japanese art critic Fukuda Kazuhiko of Tokyo.

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— SILVIO PIERSANTI

# He'd never taken an art lesson in his life, then... Man falls into a coma — & wakes up drawing masterpieces!



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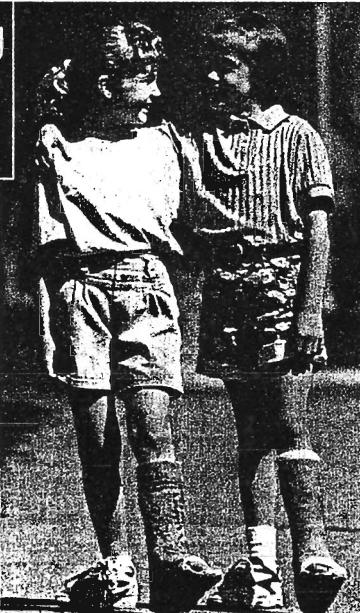
## Pals do everything together — even break a leg!

Best friends Jenna Alfonso and Mandy Woodmansee have a leg up on classmates when it comes to togetherness — both girls broke their left legs on the same day and were treated at the same hospital... by the same doctor and nurses!

Eight-year-old Mandy had her leg put in a cast recently at St. Alexius Medical Center in Bismarck, N. Dakota, after she fell while playing with her dad.

As she was leaving the hospital, her second-grade classmate Jenna, also 8, was coming in to have her left leg treated. She'd been jumping off hay bales and racing her brother at her grandparents' farm when she fell.

Jenna recalled that as the two pals crossed paths, "We just said hi."



OUT ON A LIMB: Mandy (left) and Jenna have a leg up on other girls.

**\$25 for WHY I LOVE MY PET**

\$25 will be paid for each "Why I Love My Pet" letter printed. Send your entry to: Love My Pet, NATIONAL ENQUIRER, Lantana, Fla. 33464

When we got Iggy from the animal shelter he was one mean rabbit. He would run and leap into my lap and bite my stomach. He loved to sneak up behind my husband and bite him on the seat. For a while we thought we couldn't live with Iggy, but we gave him lots of love and he began to respond.

After a year, Iggy is reformed. He still jumps on us, but he doesn't bite. Instead, he climbs up and sits on our shoulders like a parrot. The only time he bites is when he wants a treat; then he very gently nips our toes to tell us to get moving!

I'm glad we didn't give up on Iggy. He's become a rabbit we can love.

— Susan Prepejchal  
Jackson, Wis.



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— Harriet Cooper

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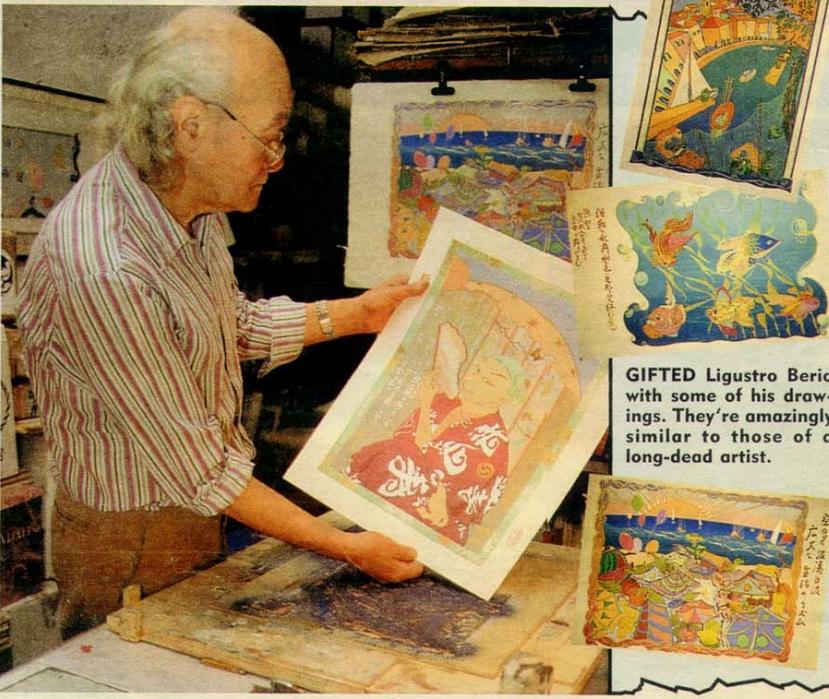
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